



WINTER POTPOURRI

■ Old Long Since

"Auld Lang Syne" is the most commonly sung song by Americans on New Year's Eve. It is an old Scottish song first published by the poet Robert Burns in 1796 after he had heard it sung by an old man from Scotland. The title translates as "old long since" and means "times gone by." People throughout the English speaking world traditionally welcome the new year by singing this song with their friends just after midnight.

Listen to the tune: <http://www.npr.org/ramfiles/atc/20011231.atc.sax.ram>

Should auld acquaintance be forgot, And never brought to mind?	For auld lang syne, my dear, For auld lang syne, We'll tak a cup of kindness
Should auld acquaintance be yet, forgot, And auld lang syne?	yet, For auld lang syne!



■ New Year's Resolutions

Do you have one? Well, so do most people around the world. The average American, for example, makes 1.8 New Year's resolutions.

In a Taco Bell/Boys & Girls Clubs of America New Year's Resolution survey, 75% of young participants responded that they intend to volunteer more in 2005. 64% said teens don't volunteer enough and 56% think their parents don't volunteer enough. However, generally speaking, most resolutions made by young people in America are about getting better grades at school, being nicer to siblings, eating less junk food, getting more sleep and more exercise.

Adults, on the other hand, usually swear to: pay off their debts, lose weight and exercise more, get a better job and improve personal relations.

Psychologists offer these tips to help you keep your New Year's resolutions:

- Make a strong decision to change your bad habits or start new, healthy ones. Be ready to make sacrifices to achieve your goal.
- Do not set your goals unrealistically high.
- Develop an action plan.
- Ask your family and friends for support.
- Reward yourself for making progress.

Do you know one of the most popular American sitcoms - *Friends*? Here's Phoebe's New Year's Resolution:

Phoebe: My New Year's Resolution is to pilot a commercial jet plane.

Chandler: That's great Pheebs, now all you have to do is find a plane load of people whose resolution is to plummet to their deaths.

■ America Celebrates!

Different religious and ethnic groups enrich American communities by celebrating their traditional holidays in a variety of ways. The coming of the New Year is celebrated by these groups at different times of the year and in more or less festive ways.

At New Year's Eve parties across the United States on **December 31**, many people watch television.

Many channels show Times Square in New York City. At one minute before midnight, a lighted ball drops slowly from the top to the bottom of a pole on one of the buildings. People count down until midnight as the ball drops. When it reaches the bottom of the pole, the new year sign is lighted. People hug and kiss, and wish each other "Happy New Year!" Unlike many other nations Americans don't celebrate New Year with fireworks.

On January first, many families and friends watch television together and enjoy football games such as the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, the Orange Bowl game in Florida or the Cotton Bowl in Texas.

One of the most unique celebrations of the coming of the New Year in the United States is the Mummers Parade in Philadelphia.

The parade is held every **New Year's Day** and is a day long event. There are 4 divisions of the parade: the Comic Division with dancing clowns in colorful costumes; the Fancy Division with participants dressed elaborately and outrageously; the String Band Division with groups of musicians; and the Fancy Brigade Division with dancing marchers in spectacular costumes. Each year about 15,000 people take part in the parade and up to a million spectators are expected.

The Polish American String Band, which performs its music with a polka sound, has been a consistent prize-winner in the Philadelphia New Year's Day Mummers Parade.



*Chinese New Year Parade in San Francisco, 2002.
Photo courtesy of KQED Public Broadcasting,
taken by Wendy Goodfriend*



*Polish American String Band, 1993.
Courtesy of Polish American String Band*

The Jewish New Year celebration is called Rosh Hashanah. In 2004 it began on **September 15**. On this day, year 5765 of the Jewish calendar began.

Rosh Hashanah remembers the creation of the world and is also called the Feast of the Trumpets, as the blowing of a ram's horn summons Jews to religious services on this day. Rosh Hashanah is a time for personal reflection and prayer.

The Islamic New Year is a religious event occurring on the first day of the first month in the Islamic calendar - Muharram. It is not "celebrated" in the festive meaning of the word but acknowledged as an occasion for reflection. Special prayers are said.

In 2005, the **10th of February**, will mark the coming of the new year for the Muslims: 1426.

The first day of the Chinese New Year 2005 will be **February 9**.

From ancient times to the present, Chinese people have been welcoming in the New Year and chasing away the evil spirits by setting off firecrackers.

Crowds gather in the narrow streets of Chinatown in New York, San Francisco and other cities where Chinese have settled. A huge cloth dragon sways back and forth around the street corners, chasing a red sunball or a white pearl-ball. Following the dragon are people playing drums and gongs, and lion dancers with paper lion heads on sticks.

In the Chinese calendar, year 2005 is known as the Year of the Rooster.

Part of the text on this page has been adapted from the publication Celebrate! Holidays in the USA (PDF) available at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/symbols/celebrat.pdf>



New England Patriots Super Bowl Most Valuable Player, Tom Brady, waves to the crowd as the Patriots are paraded down Boylston Street in Boston, Feb. 3, 2004, during a celebration for winning Super Bowl XXXVIII against the Carolina Panthers. (©AP/WWP/Lisa Poole)

■ Super Bowl Trivia

Super Bowl Sunday is an important winter event in the United States and is almost a national holiday. For practical reasons, it usually takes place in one of the warmer states. Here's a handful of information about the year's most important event in professional football:

- Why is the game called "Super Bowl"? Kansas City Chiefs owner Lamar Hunt is credited with suggesting the name. He is said to have been inspired by his kids playing with a toy named Super Ball.
- This year's Super Bowl, the championship game of the National Football League season, will take place on February 6 in Jacksonville, Florida.
- The teams which will compete for the title of the champion are not known yet, as the playoff phase of the league continues.
- Super Bowl is the most-watched, single-day sporting event in the world, with a global TV audience estimated by the NFL at more than 1 billion. The 2004 Super Bowl yielded the biggest audience ever with about 140 million Americans watching all or part of the game. Super Bowl is also usually broadcast by the Polish public TV.
- Super Bowl Sunday is also the second-largest food consumption event of the year, after Thanksgiving.
- The champions get the Lombardi trophy, a sterling silver football in a tilted position atop a pyramid-like stand.
- We will not see the only Pole playing in the NFL, Sebastian Janikowski of the Oakland Raiders, in the Super Bowl. His team has not been doing very well this season.
- Each year the American national anthem is sung before the game begins. Performers have so far included - among many other famous celebrities - Beyonce and Mariah Carey.

Super Bowl official website: <http://www.superbowl.com/>

■ 4 More Years

On January 20 Americans will celebrate the second inauguration of President George W. Bush as the president of the United States. The swearing in ceremony will take place at noon on the west front of the U.S. Capitol.

U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist will administer the oath:

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.

Later the President will deliver his inaugural address. Part of the inauguration will also be a parade of military and civilian bands starting at the intersection of Constitution and Pennsylvania Avenues and continuing to the White House.

The inaugural tradition began when George Washington assumed the office of the presidency in 1789.

The 55th Presidential Inauguration official website: <http://www.inaugural05.com/>



A crowd of President Bush supporters cheers in reaction to a Fox News report that the president had won Ohio. (©AP Photo/Ron Edmonds)

Activity Page

Win a Prize!

To take part in a drawing for one of three prizes find the answer to the following question:

How many Americans watched the Super Bowl in 2004?

Send your answer to:
zoom@usinfo.pl

Give your name and address.

The deadline is January 31.

Good Luck!

The winners from the previous issue will soon receive their prizes by mail.

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Know America 2005

Pupils from high schools are invited to take part in the competition Know America 2005.

The main prize is lunch with the U.S. Ambassador to Poland, Victor H. Ashe. Winners will also receive certificates and book prizes.

The first phase of the competition - an online test about the United States - ends on January 28, 2005. Read rules of the competition at <http://www.know-america.org> and fill in the test.

Who Said What

Change these sentences from direct speech to reported speech:

Example: He said, "I play professional football."
He said he played professional football.

Andy said, "I have to be at work on New Year's Eve."

Mom said, "I may spend the holidays abroad this time."

Jack said, "I must lose weight next year."

Emily said, "Jack has been working on that project all year long."

Ethan swore, "I will not break all my resolutions this year."

Juan said, "We had a terrible New Year's party last year. This year it's going to be different."

Hunt for Holidays

Match the following words and expressions with holidays celebrated in English-speaking countries.

menorah
pumpkin
parade
wafer
carol
egg hunt
fireworks
trick or treat

Independence Day
Christmas
Easter
Halloween
Hanukkah
St. Patrick's Day

Glossary

firecracker - a paper container with an explosive inside used to make a noise

playoff - a series of games played to determine a championship

plummet - fall suddenly and quickly

potpourri - a miscellaneous collection

ram - a male sheep

resolution - a firm intention

sacrifice - something given up for the sake of something else

solemnly - in a serious manner

sterling silver - silver of high purity

sway - to swing slowly and rhythmically

swear in - to induct into office by administration of an oath

volunteer - to work of one's own free will without pay

yield - to produce, give

Missing

Add missing prepositions in the following text:

In the Chinese calendar each year is associated ___ one of 12 animals. The Chinese believe that the characteristics ___ a given animal influence the personality ___ every person born ___ that year.

According ___ the Chinese calendar a person born ___ the year of the Rooster is characterized ___ precision, meticulousness and even perfectionism. He or she has strong convictions and usually makes definite decisions. Roosters are also talented ___ doing organizational work.